



FA TROPHY

Train tickets on sale

MORE than 300 Wycombe players, officials and fans are expected to make the long journey north to Blyth tomorrow.

Those with the shortest journey — timewise — will be the players and immediate team officials who are going by plane from Heathrow Airport. Their journey to Newcastle will take about half an hour, provided they are not held up by the weather.

This is in sharp contrast to the fans who have booked to go in the Football Special train, enterprisingly hired by the Supporters Club from British Rail.

The train leaves platform two of High Wycombe Station at 7.58 am and arrives in Morpeth at 1.55 pm. From there, coaches will take the fans the 10 miles to Croft Park, Blyth.

After the match the train will leave Morpeth at 6.10 pm and return to Wycombe two minutes before midnight.

Already 240 fans have booked tickets at only £6 each and there is plenty of room for more. Tickets will be on sale at the lower tea bar at Loakes Park today (Friday) between 2-9 pm.

VENTURE

The Supporters Club who stand to lose money on the venture if they fail to sell more tickets, consider that many fans have been deterred from booking their seats, by the poor weather.

They point out that, if the match is called off and the train has not left Wycombe station, all ticket holders will have their money refunded.

If the match is in doubt a final decision will be made on Friday evening in order, if possible, to prevent a wasted journey.

BLUES ARE OUT FOR REVENGE

FIVE members of the current Wycombe Wanderers side have bitter memories of their last visit to Blyth Spartans five years ago.

But none more so than defender Keith Mead whose tragic own goal ten minutes from the end sent Blyth to a 2-1 victory in that F.A. Amateur Cup quarter-final.

So Wycombe, and especially Mead, have good reason for wanting to exact sweet revenge tomorrow (Saturday) when they re-visit Croft Park in the second round of this year's F.A. Challenge Trophy.

In addition to Mead, the other four Wycombe players who remember that day with regret are goalkeeper John Maskell, Mick Hollified, Dylan Evans and Paul Birdseye, who was a substitute that day.

DAVIES OUT

Mead, Maskell, Hollified and Birdseye are all certain to play again while Evans is the likely substitute. He has made way in recent matches for exciting new-

Big Match preview by MICHAEL KNOX

comer Mark Judd, whose goal in the previous round put out the much fancied Barking.

Wanderers will be without the services of left-back Bobby Davies, who has a knee injury. Even if fit, he would have been unable to play because of a school outing. His place is taken by Steve Hardwick, a most capable defender.

Last season, of course, Blyth captured the national headlines with their performances in the F.A. Cup, but Blues manager Andy Williams is not worried by what they did then.

Mr Williams, who went up to watch Blyth beat Goole Town in the first round replay, said this week: "There's no reason why we can't win. Blyth are by no means unbeatable."

"We are not scared of their reputation and we will not be overawed. If anything the players will be inspired by their reputation."

Wycombe's main problem at present is the wintry weather.

They have been unable to play for a fortnight and will thus be short of match practice.

However they should still be match fit, having had intensive training sessions at Bisham Abbey on Saturday and on ice-bound Loakes Park on Tuesday evening.

The conditions at Blyth are unlikely to encourage attractive football. The pitch is likely to be either hard and frosty or soft and muddy and so, as Mr Williams says, it will be down to a question of character.

Blyth seem certain to field the same side that knocked out Goole. Manager Jack Marks has been unable to add to his depleted squad and so will do battle with the same line-up, which means that Ron Guthrie will play out of position, in midfield.

Mr Marks has classed the game as "the most important of the season" and predicts an extra tough match. He rates Wycombe

"as one of the top, non-league sides in the country" and admits that Spartans will have to be firing on all cylinders to beat them.

The manager has the added headache that he could be losing more valuable members of his squad to League clubs. Cambridge United and Colchester have invited striker Peter Davies and utility player Steve Carney for trials.

Saturday's match could be in doubt if the weather does not improve over the next two days. Heavy snowfall on Sunday left a thick layer of snow on the pitch. This had cleared by Wednesday but the ground underneath was frozen.

Until a month ago, I would have given Wycombe little chance of beating Blyth but the arrival of Judd has coincided with an improvement of spirit and I have a sneaking feeling they can do it.

Mr Williams already knows what it's like to beat Blyth — for Enfield in an Amateur Cup semi-final. By 5 pm tomorrow his players might be able to share the experience with him.

CUP-TIE IS OFF — AGAIN

WYCOMBE'S Berks and Bucks Senior Cup third round tie against Maidenhead had to be postponed for the second time on Tuesday night because of the frozen surface at Loakes Park.

The match will now be played at Wycombe on Tuesday night provided, of course, there is a result at Blyth tomorrow.

Blues had originally rearranged their postponed Isthmian League visit to Oxford for this coming Tuesday, but that match is now definitely off — one of the few certain factors in the present situation.

Should Wycombe and Blyth draw at Croft Park tomorrow, the replay will be at Loakes Park on Wednesday, starting at 2 pm.

Blyth asked for the start to be brought forward so that their players would miss only one day's work instead of two. Their action is within the rules of the competition.

Wanderers have not yet decided what to do, should tomorrow's game be postponed, but it will have to be played in midweek.

Plan to improve the Senior Cup

AN attempt to enhance the status of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup has been proposed by the current champions Wycombe Wanderers in a special discussion document which they have sent to the County F.A.

The main object of their plans is to make the Senior Cup a midweek competition to be played under lights in its later stages. This proposal, Wycombe feel, would allow Reading to enter the competition and so raise the Cup's status.

In the document Wycombe say "It is felt that the absence of Reading, the only Football League team in the two counties, from the competition is a serious omission and efforts should be made to bring them in."

"It is appreciated that, at present, because of F.A. regulations and their Saturday commitment to the League, they are exempt from our competition. It is worth mentioning

that the final of Notts County Senior Cup was between Notts Forest and Mansfield. The final was played midweek under lights and other ties were also played midweek.

NO LIGHTS

Wycombe say they realise that more than half the teams in the competition do not possess floodlights, but that would not rule them out of the competition altogether.

Of the 29 clubs who played in the Senior Cup this season, 16 do not have lights including three local clubs Burnham, Flackwell Heath and Holmer Green.

The proposal suggests that these 16 clubs play off in a preliminary competition and the top two go forward to join the 13 others plus Reading in a midweek floodlight competition.

If the two without lights are drawn at home they must play their match on their opponents' ground.

Wycombe argue that it would be an additional spur to am-

bitious clubs to obtain floodlights and so enter the first round proper automatically.

AVAILABLE

The Wanderers point out, "floodlights have been available for at least 25 years and it is considered that this is an adequate period for ambitious clubs to obtain this facility."

"Earnest consideration of these proposals by the County Cup and Rules Committee is requested. Not only would the Senior Cup become more prestigious, but the County would be seen as a forward thinking Association, prepared by experiment to improve the status of their Senior Cup, which would also benefit the clubs they represent."

The 13 clubs in Berks and Bucks with lights are Wycombe, Slough, Maidenhead, Windsor, Wokingham, Chesham, Marlow, Bracknell, Amersham, Chalfont St Peter, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury United, Hungerford.